[*For Private Circulation.*]

LETTERS FROM AN ASSISTANT-SURGEON IN THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S SERVICE, TO HIS FATHER.

[The object of putting these Letters into type is to answer the following inquiry from many kind friends:—"Have you heard from your Son lately; how is he getting on, and what is he doing?"]

Letter No. 1.

My dear Father, Red Sea, Feb. 8, 1854.

After leaving you at Malta, we had a strong N.W. gale all the way to Egypt. The wind, however, was in our favour, and the Himalaya made the shortest run known from Malta to Alexandria, in which latter harbour we anchored at 4 o'clock on the 2nd.

It was impossible for me to leave without regret a vessel in which I had experieneed so mueh kind attention, and where all the arrangements are so perfeet. As you yourself know, she possesses every possible eomfort for a passenger.

The harbour of Alexandria is awkward to enter with so large a ship as the Himalaya, on aeeount of its shoals and reefs, and the tremendous sea which is generally running there.

After being landed in boats, a delightful seene of fighting and confusion took place. Eaeh man was surrounded by a troop of Arab donkey-boys, and had to fight his way out. G——— was the very picture of helplessness: he was loaded with luggage and wedged in between four donkeys; perceiving whieh, I rushed to the reseue, and we manfully fought our way out. An Arab is not disturbed by a light blow,—it must be a floorer to shake him off. U——— was at onee captured and a prisoner, when they took him down a by-street, and demanded ten shillings to take him to the hotel, but finally took one, and were thankful. The people of Egypt are extremely dirty, but interesting to fresh eomers from their novelty. The town of Alexandria is thoroughly Eastern.

Having an hour of daylight in which to see "the lions" of the place, we made the best of our way to Pompey's Pillar and Cleopatra's Needle. These have been described so often already, that I will not take up time with them. The latter resembles very much its sister in Paris.

For a traveller there is nothing else of much interest in the town; so that the summons to the canal was welcome rather than otherwise. The Company packed us away in vans to convey us to the canal boat. There the scene would strike a European fresh from home as very curious. A strong lurid light was obtained from blazing logs, which were set in braziers and held up aloft, giving a sinister and most ferocious appearance to the dark faces of the Egyptians who crowded around selling oranges, cakes, &c., and all shouting vigorously for *bakshéish*, and by general skirmishes and single combats amongst themselves, not only relieved their own feelings, but entertained us. Now and then a police officer would walk in amongst them, and box their ears all round. He seemed to enjoy the joke exceedingly. A lane having been formed, a long string of camels stalked into the space before the boat: these were laden with bullion, packed in small boxes. At the word of command, they all knelt down, with a great deal of groaning and complaining. The money being stowed on board, the captain, a black gentleman from Abyssinia, thought it time to start. The canal boat is nothing better than a decked barge, with a cooking-place. It is towed by a small steamer. The two cabins, ladies' and gentlemen's, were occupied immediately. All the chairs, stools and benches being appropriated without delay, those who could not obtain such a trifling convenience slept, some on tables, others under them, and about the floor generally. A few preferred the deck, where I myself passed the night, my pillow being a box of bullion. For the first part of the night sleep was out of the question, our amiable captain treating himself and us to a great deal of extemporary music from an enormous trumpet or horn, carrying on loud conversations with all the market-boats that he passed,—and these were not a few. About three in the morning, we encountered the overland mail and passengers returning to England; hurried out and gave them three cheers, which they cordially returned. I got up at sunrise, and shook off the dust, orange-peel, and vermin, of which latter commodity there happened to be a large stock on board. We now got a view of the canal, without seeing much, for I am sure the one at Paddington is much prettier. There were plenty of market-boats going to Alexandria: all these have lateen sails, one or two in number, and go along pretty well. They were mostly filled with corn, but some carried fruit, and others passengers.

Birds are very numerous upon the banks, but not in very great variety. Kites abound in every village; the pied kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*) is very common, as is also a fine spur-winged plover; it is about the size and shape of a lapwing, but brown in colour: wagtails innumerable,—two species, *M. alba* and another, the name of which I do not know. They are excessively tame, running about the deck of the steamboat without fear. There were several kinds of sandpipers, but they were too far off to distinguish the species. The hooded crow is to be seen everywhere.

About 9 o'clock we reached Alfeh, which is the termination of the canal, and its point of junction with the Nile. This is a good example of Egyptian villages in general. The houses are partly excavated in the side of a hill and the rest built up of mud; holes made in the mud wall serve for windows and doors, and the whole place teems with pigeons and children. The voyage up the Nile to Cairo is made in a larger steamboat and with much better accommodation. The date-palms give some interest to the scene, otherwise the Nile at this point much resembles the Thames at Putney.

Steaming all day and night, the boat reached Boulac (the port of Cairo) at half-past four in the morning. I drove thence to Shepherd's Hotel, which was very crowded, as it always is during the overland passage. Here we drew lots to decide which of the passengers were to traverse the Desert first. Fortune threw me into the second batch, which was to start at two o'clock in the afternoon, thus allowing time for a hasty view of Cairo.

Accordingly four of us made up a party, hired a dragoman and procured donkeys. The Egyptian donkey is a wonderful animal, doing any amount of work and carrying any weight. In fact, some of the passengers went to the Pyramids and back, twenty-two miles, at a gallop the whole way, without change of donkeys. The only objection to them is that they are much addicted to stumbling. My individual put down his head, kicked up his heels, and threw me over his head in the most elegant style, to the intense delight of the Mussulman population, who shrieked out "Shilan Giaour!" the boys performing a war-dance round their prostrate foe.

Amongst "the lions" of Cairo are the mosque, bazaars, slave-market, palaces and gardens of Shulna. The mosque is a very fine building, commenced many years since by Mohammed Ali, and not yet completed. The inside is entirely of polished alabaster, with windows of beautiful stained glass. The whole effect, however, is spoiled by a modern French chandelier. The slave-market is all nonsense. When the mail comes in, a man

who calls himself a dealer, collects an old woman, two or three girls, and a little boy, puts them into a small yard, and shows them to the open-mouthed traveller as slaves fresh from Abyssinia. He receives a rupee, every one is content, and the traveller provided with a story to tell his friends.

The highest ground in Cairo is near the mosque, and from thence you obtain a splendid view of the Pyramids, quite as good as if they were closer.

From your affectionate son,

Letter No. 2.

Bombay, Feb. 26, 1854.

The Semiramis frigate, with the mails and passengers on board, dropped anchor in the harbour of Bombay, on the evening of the 21st: thus we have made a quick passage from England. I slept on board that night, and the next morning went on shore to report myself. The British hotel was recommended to me as a good one; I accordingly went there. I afterwards applied for a tent on the esplanade, which was put up yesterday: it is a double one, the other half being occupied by a brother officer.

Tent life is very pleasant. We have a large one, facing the sea, well furnished with chairs, tables, sofas, beds, and mosquito-curtains, our own servants, and a good table. Within two yards of me now, as I write, are several species of birds. 1st, The hoopoe (*Upupa Senegalensis* ?), very tame, and perching about at my feet, within reach of a stick. 2ndly, Two species of wagtail, white and grey, fighting with the hoopoe: sparrows innumerable, but different from ours; they are perched in a cluster on a trellis-work at the tent door. Two crows are sitting on the tent-pegs, one on each side of the entrance; a bird called "mino" here (*Pastor Mahrattensis* ?) is feeding two yards off; whilst another pretty blackbird, with a long tail, published in one of the Nos. of the "Birds of Asia," is pluming its feathers within arm's length. Kites here are as common as crows,—literally in hundreds, performing the office of scavengers.

Letter No. 3.

Bombay, March 7, 1854.

I am just upon the point of leaving for Kurrachee, and must start directly the mail arrives from England. I am attached at

present to the 2nd European regiment at Kurrachee, but shall probably soon receive orders to move higher up into Seinde, amongst the fevers which are very prevalent there at a later season of the year, when the Indus begins to fall.

Ornithology, you may be sure, will not be forgotten. The following species have already fallen to your gift of a double-barrelled gun. Firing into the midst of a flock as it swept by, I dropped four of the *Pastor roseus* in very fine plumage. Kingfishers are common and very beautiful; *Nectariniæ* also, of which I shot several, but have no means of determining the species at present, my books not having arrived. A fine collection of these beautiful birds could be made here. King crows are to be found everywhere: what is their scientific name*? Sandpipers are as common and tame as larks. The Bulbul (*Pycnonotus jocosus*?) abounds, and commits sad havoc in the gardens. Several species of wagtail, to me unknown, various raptorial birds, &c.

Last Monday I paid a visit to Elephanta, an island about twelve miles from the town. Hiring a dingy, or native boat, with four rowers for the day, they pulled over in about two hours, the tide favouring, and landed me at the far-famed caves, about which I think that a great deal of unnecessary fuss is made, although it is heresy to say so. The finest work is a centre-piece consisting of three finely sculptured heads, of gigantic size, which have evidently been cut by a Greek, being in quite a different style from the other sculptures. The roof of the cave is studded with the nests of a curious little beetle. These nests are funnel-shaped, about three inches long, and formed of the softened and mouldering rock. Each one contains a community, who work together. If any entomological friends have a desire to possess some, I will obtain specimens.

Elephanta contains many birds, strange and new to me,—plenty of pigeons, doves, parrots, and numerous pretty finches; and horrible thickets of Euphorbia, the prickles of which pierce clothes, boots, and everything, and the juice stings your eyes, if by chance it gets in them.

Besides Europeans, Bombay contains individuals of every Eastern nation,—not stragglers, but regular communities: Persians, Chinese, Hindoos, Gentoos, Jews, Mussulmen, Scindians, Punjaubees, Portuguese, Mahrattas, Malabar people, Malays, and many others. Every variety of costume is to be seen, and every kind of church: joss-houses, Hindoo temples, mosques, English churches, Roman ditto, synagogues, &c.

* *Dicrurus macrocercus.*

Letter No. 4.

Kurrachee, March 22, 1854.

Arrived at length in Seinde, Sind, or Sindh: having quitted London only two months since, I can hardly as yet justly appreciate the distance that separates us. The voyage here from Bombay was decidedly disagreeable, inasmuch as into a boat not so large as a Gravesend steamer were crammed not less than 350 people, of which 300 were deck passengers; a detachment of choice native sappers and miners, pickaxes, shovels, &c.,—every married man having a fluctuating number of wives and children according to his means,—every wife with a steady amount of cooking-pots and dirt, and every child like its mother as regards filth. Each family appropriated about two feet square of deck, and never stirred thence from embarkation to debarkation,—a period of four days and a half,—eating, drinking, sleeping, and being sick, where they lay.

The cabin-passengers, about a dozen, were driven quite aft to the wheel, and very few ever ventured beyond the companion. The second day it began to blow from the N.E. directly in our course, and right ahead; in a few hours it increased to a gale,—and you may imagine our position. The poor natives were drenched, and obliged to live upon raw rice,—the water sweeping the decks, to increase the pleasures of the voyage. Cholera appeared, as might be expected, and in six hours killed a man. Nothing could be done for him, as there were no medicines of any kind on board, not even mustard for a poultice. Fortunately no other case occurred, and upon arriving at Kurrachee the troops were put into quarantine.

Kurrachee certainly at first sight is decidedly disagreeable, but one gets used to it. It is a sea-port, three parts surrounded by desert,—nothing but sand, sand, sand, and much resembles Alfeh, the termination of the Egyptian canal. A causeway about three miles long, built by Sir Charles Napier, leads you into the town, or rather the camp, this being a military station grafted upon an old native town.

There is always some difficulty for a new-comer, without introductions, in obtaining house-room, as there are no hotels. Government, however, provides a bungalow for twenty-four hours, in which he can live; after that time, the traveller must turn out, if there be others waiting.

I was billeted upon a gentleman of our regiment, and stayed with him a few days, till a bungalow was vacant. Each officer has to provide himself with a house, as Government only gives lodging to common soldiers; and at present, houses are very

scaree at Kurraehee. The house being purchased, then comes the furnishing. I have had to buy everything, from blaeking-brushes to tables and ehairs. Sueh a list! carpets, tea-spoons, cooking-pots, lamps, bed and bedding, and, in faet, everything that ean possibly be required for setting-up a single man in a small establishment.

The following is my small army of scrvants: 1st, Rose Majel Antone, a Malabar Christian, black as my hat. He is my scoundrel-in-ehief, for it must be taken as a general rule here that all servants are thieves, more or less. He is called Butler, Bhoy, or Nocher, gets twelve rupees a month, and finds himself, buys my provisions and everything else, and so by commissions makes it worth to him about thirty rupees. A capital servant, however, and can do everything,—eook for me, dress me, wait at table, and look smart, besides preventing any one else from robbing me. This man travels everywhere with me, and when invited out to dinner or at mess, always waits behind my chair. Now, wherever he travels, his encumbrance, or wife, travels also, and I am expected to pay her expenses (custom of country). This "better half" consists of a bundle of clothes with some toes sticking out, and a pair of bright eyes; for being both young and pretty, she is earefully kept out of sight of the Doctor Sahib, as I am ealled (also custom of country).

Next comes the Mufsaul, or second servant, who does all the work the butler will not do himself. He gets eight rupees *per mensem*, and what he can steal.

3rdly. Latto-wallah, or groom, who perspires mueh in my serviee, not only attending to the pony as Lattoo, but running alongside wherever I gallop to, so as to be ready to take the reins on my dismounting. Six rupees is his pay: he steals the horse's food as part of his duty.

4thly. Dholee, or washerman: rceeives seven rupees a month for washing all my things; which is cheap, considering the work to be done,—shirts and trowsers being changed twice, and sometimes three times every day. He lives on the premises.

5thly. Puggee, or watchman, at three rupees,—a very necessary animal, who prowls about the place all night, coughing and groaning very loudly, to keep off thieves. He is a professional thief really, but known to the police, and paid to keep his brethren at a distance, and is very honest while in the Sahib's service, being responsible for evcrything that is lost during the night. Water-carriers and sweepers eomplete the list,—and all this fuss about an assistant-surgeon! What an establishment a grand Sahib has to keep up, you may imagine.

Kurrachee may be said to consist of camp and bazaars. The regiments here at present are, the 2nd European Light Infantry,

a Company's corps, the 83rd and 86th Queen's, a troop of Artillery, and the 14th and 8th Native Infantry.

Our regiment has the only band in the place, and is supposed to have the best mess. The bazaars are three: the regimental bazaar, where the soldiers obtain their provisions at certain fixed prices: the Sudder bazaar, where all kinds of European goods are sold, also furniture and officers' kits; this is chiefly kept by Parsees: and lastly, Kurrachee bazaar proper, inhabited only by the natives; this is two miles away from town, and very interesting, for there you see the true Scindian, a man totally different from the inhabitants of India,—very hairy, with much beard and moustache, tall, well-made, a Mussulman, and with habits and language quite distinct from those of the Hindoo. He wears no turban, but a hat very similar in shape to ours, only topsy-turvy, is peaceable, harmless, and well-disposed towards the English. The houses in the bazaar are built of mud and chopped straw, and paved with cow-dung.



The streets are seldom above four or five feet wide, and covered in by matting stretching from housetop to housetop across the street. You can buy all kinds of native work, some of which is very pretty, and would be much coveted by ladies at home, if they could see it.

Whilst I am writing this, an order has come for me to proceed at once to Hyderabad, on the Indus, in medical charge of a detachment of the 86th Regiment. No peace for the wicked! I have been only two days settled in my own house, and am sent off a three weeks' journey up the Indus. I don't know when you will hear from me again,—not till I return to Kurrachee, for the postal arrangements up-country are rather deficient. The journey will be as follows: up the Indus on flats, at the rate of twenty-five miles a day, and anchoring every night,—a week's stay at Hyderabad,—and then return overland on a camel, travelling at night and resting by day, for the sun is no joke here. I must take all my cooking utensils, canteen, bed, &c. The march will take almost ten days; for as I come back alone, I can take my time, and shoot the whole way. I am told game is plentiful, and wild hog to be found on the road.

Altogether, the journey would be very pleasant were it not for the expense, which Government says I must defray myself.

Letter No. 5.

Kotree, on the left bank of the Indus, opposite Hyderabad, April 17, 1854. Thermometer 135°.

I am at present at the first station from Hyderabad, on the road to Kurrachee,—regularly encamped under mango trees. The E. I. C. steamer Satellite is alongside, which affords some protection from the heat of the sun, and in the cabin of this boat I am now writing. The camels are taking it easy in the shade, and the baggage is lying about in delightful disorder. *Baggage* sounds strange when speaking of a three-weeks' journey; but this is not England, where all the necessary luggage consists of a carpet-bag thrown on the top of a cab,—and away to the nearest station. In Scinde, one must take the following articles, even for a short march:—bed and bedding, washing apparatus, canteen, containing all the apparatus for eating, cooking utensils, something to sit upon, provisions, clothes, &c. &c. &c.,—altogether justifying the term *baggage*.

On the 8th of April we started from Kurrachee, and put out to sea, having about 120 soldiers, &c. on board, but were soon forced to return, on account of a very heavy sea running at the time. The only practicable mouth of the Indus is about sixty miles from Kurrachee; and across the mouth of this is a bar, with only about 6 feet of water over it at high tide. The river boats are therefore made flat-bottomed, to enable them to cross this and other shoal-waters. They draw from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water, and are consequently unable to withstand the heavy seas that are so common on this coast. The captain has to choose his day, and run for it. The next day was more favourable; and we reached the mouth in safety, crossed the bar without bumping, and anchored for the night by some marshy flats. The men went on shore to cook their suppers before it became dark, whilst the officer in command and myself went for a stroll with our guns. The ground was covered with sand-pipers, curlews, terns, gulls, spoonbills, flamingos, herons, ducks, and, in fact, every species of water-fowl. We tried for the ducks, but they were very shy; and after an hour's wading, I got a shot at a brace of shieldrakes flying overhead. Firing right and left, I killed one and wounded the other (not bad for a beginner). They are fine birds, very similar, if not quite the same, as our own species. Mr. Lewis knocked over a shoveller, and that was the extent of our sport. In the winter-time the ducks and other wild fowl congregate here in thousands upon thousands, and no place could be better adapted for them. There are some very pretty river terns, and a most lovely kingfisher; but I am in such a delightful state of ignorance as to what birds

are scarce and which well-known, that I skin but few; and no one in the Presidency understands or cares the least for them; and as for books, the word "ornithology" is not comprehended. The first numbers of the 'Birds of Asia' would be of very great assistance, as also Colonel Sykes's Catalogue. Your works have been very much admired by all who have seen them.

The next morning we crossed the flats, a very shallow part of the river. Drawing 3 feet 9 inches of water, the boat passed over in 3 feet 10 inches,—close-shaving, you will allow. From this point upwards, as far as Mooltan, there is plenty of water. The Indus is, without doubt, a magnificent river, as far as water is concerned; but the banks, as high as Hyderabad, are far from prepossessing, alternating betwixt a barren waste of sand or mud, and a low, thick, dense jungle far from pleasing to the eye. Near the town, however, there are some fine groves of mangos, and a few palms. The river itself is very wide in some places, varying from a half to three miles,—and this 300 or 400 miles up the country. The current is tremendous. You will be able to judge of it yourself by the following fact, that sometimes while crossing, and exposed to the full force of the stream, we lost ground at the rate of four miles an hour, although steaming against it at a speed of eight miles an hour,—thus proving the rate of the current to be about twelve miles in these places. The average, however, was about six miles; and we could only make way against it by taking advantage of back-waters and still-waters, and various other nautical manœuvres. The river is extremely dangerous, on account of the numerous eddies, whirlpools, and under-currents. The best swimmer will surely be drowned, and men rarely rise again if they once get under the surface. Sometimes, in comparatively still water, you will see a sudden eddy and gush rise from the bottom, causing a violent commotion in the river, and an instant after, all will become suddenly still. From these various causes, the river is the muddiest that you can possibly conceive,—much worse than the Thames at London Bridge. During the inundation, when the water reaches its highest, and the current is swiftest, a strong south-west monsoon blows, and then the wind against stream "kicks up such a sea," that the boats are sometimes unable to run. The inundation is caused by the great mass of fluid sent down from the Himalayas during the hot summer months. The Indus rises gradually (is rising now), fills itself up to the brim, and at last overflows its banks, spreading fever and malaria far and wide. Villages are depopulated, the inhabitants dying and deserting them; soldiers and officers are victimized, shivering and shaking with ague. And this is Scinde, the "happy valley" of one author, but rather,

according to an ancient Scindee legend, "the accursed." 130° in a tent, with a strong hot wind blowing, must certainly be a great promoter of happiness! 150° in the sun is certain death to the adventurous sportsman. Dare to show your nose out of doors after eight o'clock, or before six, and a sun-stroke awaits you. Be a sportsman, and your liver vanishes: remain at home, and fever attacks your frame. But these maledictions are bestowed upon Hyderabad and Upper Scinde; for Kurrachee is really a pleasant place, with a fine healthy climate, a cool sea-breeze always blowing,—very different from the scorching blast of Upper Scinde.

On the 14th we arrived off Hyderabad, nothing particular of interest having occurred on the journey. We anchored every evening and went on shore, passing the night moored to the bank. I shot some of the famed black partridge of Scinde, *Francolinus vulgaris*, which you must know well. It is a very handsome species. As a bird for the table, it is excellent, the flesh white and delicate. I also shot a very fine plover with a coral-red fleshy expansion extending from the eye over the forehead, and meeting on the opposite side. The throat and chest are black, legs yellow, eye dark brick-red. What is it? I have its egg. The bird is common enough here. I have also the egg of an Œdicnemus. What species are there of this genus? The egg is very similar to that of our own in England. The last day of the voyage great excitement was caused by the appearance of alligators in the river. They are common above Hyderabad, and ugly green-looking beasts they are, crawling about on the sand-banks. But *the* peculiarities and *the* lions of the Indus are the *pullah* and the *pullah*-fishers. The pullah is a much-esteemed fish, said to be found only in the Indus: it is something like the grey mullet in appearance, and in taste little better than a mackerel, but is thought a great deal of. Every one eats pullah. It is caught in the following manner, by a particular caste of natives brought up to the business. A large earthen-vessel is procured, shaped like a lentil-seed, with an aperture at the top; the vessel is about a yard in diameter, and half a yard deep, the orifice 8 inches across. This of course floats on the water, and will sustain a considerable weight. Pushing it off from the side, the fisherman throws himself on his belly across it, and so closes the aperture with his body, thus forming a kind of boat, which is propelled by the motions of the arms and legs, as in swimming. This buoys him up on the rapid stream, and prevents his being swallowed up by the eddies of the river, and also enables him to use his net, which is stretched across a kind of fork attached



to the end of a long pole. This machine is held perpendicularly in the water, the ends of the fork touching the bottom. The



current causes the net to bag and spread out as the man floats on his earthen pot down-stream. The pullah, lying head up, cannot see the net, from the muddiness of the water, so that it comes upon them unawares. The fisherman feels a tug, and instantly closes the net by means of a string he holds, and the pullah is caught. The next process is to haul him up, and stick the poor brute with a skewer, whilst still in the snare; then taking it out, and shifting his belly to one side, the pullah-wallah drops the fish into the pot and resumes his agreeable employment. (Would not this do for Charles? he might catch scores of gudgeons in the Thames by this means, besides astonishing the natives.) Having floated some miles down-stream, he paddles to shore, shoulders his support and net, and walks back again to the point from which he started, repeating the whole process again and again, from morning to night, from youth to old age, earning a few anas per diem.

I must wind up now, but in my next I will say something about Hyderabad and the journey back to Kurrachee, for I have orders to return immediately; and there being no boat ready to start, I have hired camels, and shall perform the journey by regular marches in about ten days. As soon as the sun goes down, I am off for the next station, Lhaiknoomaur.

Tell Miss ——— that she would grow green with envy if she could see the magnificent table-cloths made here, embroidered with gold and silver, and of most elaborate pattern; and as for smoking-caps and slippers, the Scindees will beat all the young ladies of England out of the market.

My kindest love to all at home.

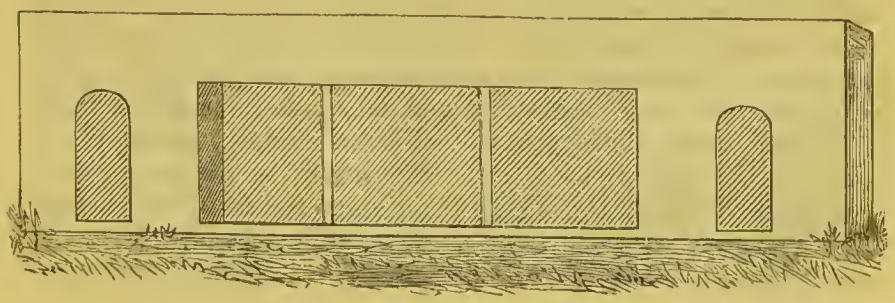
Letter No. 6.

Kurrachee, May 4, 1854.

You will perhaps like to hear something about my overland trip from Hyderabad to Kurrachee; the journey is perfectly safe and easy, and enables one to form some idea of Scinde.

Monday, April 17, left Hyderabad at 5 A.M. Had some difficulty in getting the camels on board the ferry-boat; the side being about three feet higher than the shore, they had to jump in,—no small feat for a camel; as the stream is very strong at this place, we had to track up about two miles before attempting to cross with our load, *i. e.* three camels, a few donkeys, about thirty natives, and my party. The boat was then quickly poled to the other side; by this time, 7 A.M., it was too hot to proceed, and I spent the day on board the Hon. Company's steamer Satellite. At 6 P.M. the camels were loaded and saddled (a long process, the men swearing and beasts groaning tremendously), and after a most fatiguing ride reached Lhaiknoomaur, the first station, about $12\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock, minus considerably the wherewithal to sit down upon. Went to the Dhum-sallah, but found it awfully hot, the walls not having cooled from the day's sun; so I had my mattress placed on the ground in the jungle outside, where it was tolerably cool. At this season there is no danger from sleeping in the open air, no dew falling at this distance from the sea. During the night the jackals became decidedly familiar and impertinent, howling and screeching within a few yards of me, but it is a great comfort that they don't bite.

April 18.—Up at sunrise; went out for a walk; saw a few hares, but no black partridge; shot some pigeons for breakfast. The country is very sandy, with here and there patches of jungle; returned at 7, very hot and much disgusted. The village consists of about four huts and twice that number of inhabitants, and yields wood and water to the traveller, but no provisions of any kind. At 8 o'clock, was glad to retreat into one of the pigeon-holes of the Dhum-sallah, an outline of which I send you.



These places have no doors or windows, but are quite open, and are without furniture of any kind. The Dhum-sallah is, in fact, merely a shed built by Government for the accommodation of travellers, both native and Sahib; the latter take the two ends, the former occupy the centre. By this time a hot wind was blowing, raising up clouds of dust and sand, and continued increasing until one o'clock, when it became a perfect hurricane, simoon and sirocco: the dust consists of the high dried Indus-mud, deposited during the last inundation; it is very fine and penetrates everywhere; I was soon covered with dirt from head to foot, the intense heat bathing one in perspiration, which is instantly sopped up by the fine mud-dust, and thus forms an extra garment. "Dust-devils" whirled into the shed and broke over my bed and dinner; my tumbler was soon cracked by the scorching gusts playing upon it: at times during the day the thermometer could not have indicated less than 115 or 120 degrees in the Dhum-sallah. It was the hottest day that had occurred within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. At 6 o'clock, after a good wash, we started for the next station and arrived at Jurruck by 11, over a very bad pathway, amidst dust-storms which nearly smothered me.

April 19.—At Jurruck, there is a Government-furnished Bungalow with doors, &c., at which one may put up for the small charge of one rupee per diem; you must, however, mess yourself, find your own cooking utensils, plates, &c. This is a large village or town for Scinde, and has one European resident,—the collector. It is built on a hill, with a fine view of the Indus. Close by are capital shooting jungles or Shikargah's, as the splendid preserves of the Ameers are called. In them are to be found wild hog, hyæna, hog-deer, black partridge, &c., and during the reigns of the Ameers it was mutilation or death for the poor wretch caught poaching; numerous villages and even whole provinces were depopulated to make these preserves. I was too much fatigued by yesterday's heat and evening ride to go out. The country round the town is very hilly, with an abundance of volcanic debris, and has a peculiar fiery appearance. Loaded at dusk, and sent the luggage on before; started myself about an hour later, for the road becoming here tolerably good, there was no need of a guide, and it is much more pleasant to trot on after your baggage than to creep along with it,—the baggage camel going at the rate of three miles an hour, while your riding camel makes five or six, or even seven. The volcanic hills in this part of the country are very still at night; the silence being only broken by the screech of a jackal, or a hyæna's laugh. Last week a panther made his appearance and slaughtered two camels,—an unusual occurrence.

The hills are composed of red igneous rock, and their only vegetation is the poisonous Euphorbia, between the bushes of which the air seems to stagnate and never cool. Descending into the plains we came into a very fertile country, which, however, appeared to be little cultivated; but it is very difficult to make accurate observations in the dark. I passed the luggage here, and trotted on ahead for about two hours, by which time I thought that the village at which we were next to stop must be near; still I could see nothing, and there was no one of whom to ask a question in these wilds. Having halted, I listened for that universal guide to a village in India, the barking of dogs, and in a quarter of an hour heard the usual canine concert faintly to the left, and, following the sound, soon arrived at the station. The men behind with the luggage passed half the night searching for the place, and had great difficulty in finding it.

April 20.—Up with the sun, and out to see what the country was like. The station, which is called Hulliaga, being placed in the midst of a capital shooting-ground, the first sound that struck me on awaking was the loud call of the black partridge all around the Dhum-sallah. They are very difficult to get within range, from their habit of running before the sportsman, and seldom rising. In order to get a "bag," you must have at least a dozen beaters. I managed, however, to kill a brace, after much labour and walking. The jungle here is very thick, and full of birds, hares, and snakes; for the latter of which, including large boas, it is particularly celebrated; parrakeets are also very plentiful. Dined sumptuously on pullah and black partridge, both of which are capital; and, in a cool climate, where the partridge could be kept for a week or two, it would be quite equal to gelinotte; the flesh is plump, white and well-flavoured. At 4 P.M. sent off the baggage, and mounted at 6 myself. The country is volcanic for the first few miles, and of great geological interest; and from thence all the way to Tattah, there is nothing but dense scrub and jungle. This town is smelt long before it can be seen, from the quantity of a peculiar aromatic powder used by the natives as a scent, but which, to a European's nose, is extremely disagreeable. I send a pinch in this letter; and as the post leaves in half an hour, I have not time to continue my notes now, but must defer them to a future time. I have just seen enough of the country to satisfy me that there are many interesting objects of natural history to be found in Scinde. There is plenty of fine jungle and woods. In the winter, that is, from December to May, the climate is fine and healthy; after that time, however, it is very fatal. After the monsoon I shall probably be ordered away from Scinde, and may not come here again. If I could possibly obtain leave for five or six months during the

healthy season, I think I could do much for science; I might in that time traverse the whole of Scinde, and even go beyond the boundary, up to Khelat, the Khan of which country is our friend and ally. I believe Dr. Stocks, a friend of Dr. Hooker, has been in this latter country, with which exception no other scientific person has visited it.

Letter No. 7.

Kurrachee, May 20, 1854.
Thermometer 91° in the room.

I have just received Charles's letter of April 4, and am glad he enjoyed his continental trip so much. The war with Russia makes us all very anxious for news, and await the tardy arrival of the mail with impatience, for if menaced from that quarter we may be sent to the Persian frontier: all officers' furloughs are soon to be stopped, and no one knows whither he may be despatched; if any fighting, or chance of it, should take place, our regiment is promised service; as yet the colours are clean and new, and laurels scanty. The second light infantry is a fine regiment, well appointed and trained; the men, all imported from home, are strong and healthy, and presumptively brave, for as yet they have had no trial, and both officers and men would be glad of a row. Our mess is good and mess-kit handsome, *i. e.* the plate, chandeliers, crockery, &c. The dinner on mess nights, which occur twice a month, is a very pretty sight; from twenty to fifty officers, in undress uniform, sit down to as handsomely furnished a dinner as you can see at the London Tavern or any other feeding-place to which the British public is fond of resorting. The table is tastefully laid out with flowers and silver, of which latter the mess has a good store: each person is attended by his own servant, besides a dozen common to all for removing dishes, &c., so that occasionally there are fifty servants in the room, each dressed differently according to his religion, caste, or country, and no two turbans alike; you must know that it is a mark of disrespect to lay aside the turban, even in the house, and equally so for a native to enter the room with his shoes on. Directly the cloth is removed and the dessert placed on the table, a good band strikes up and continues playing for two or three hours: the only objection to the mess is its expense, which no unmarried man can escape. Every bachelor is compelled to pay for and even to attend mess; he is there, so to speak, on duty; Charles on hearing this will begin to fume and talk of the liberty of the subject, but we are under military law and must do as we are

told: republican notions are at a discount, and would soon lead to an arrest; it is a great comfort to have certain stated duties to perform and no one to interfere with you. If the expenses are high, so is the pay. I receive at present 250 rupees per month, or £300 per annum, enough for a single man to live comfortably without putting much by. In my last I mentioned that I had arrived at Tattah, and to continue: passed a tolerably good night in the open air, had bad dreams, which I soon found to be caused by the howling of a hyæna within a few yards of me; sent him off by howling myself, and then slept soundly till morning, when I ascertained that a handkerchief containing biscuits had been dragged from under my head, the biscuits eaten, and the handkerchief torn to pieces. In the morning it was cold, but by 12 o'clock it must have been 110° in the Dhum-sallah. Tattah is a celebrated place in Scinde, famous for fever, gold cloth work, and the beauty of its women; for the latter it is proverbial throughout the whole of India: being of course anxious to judge for myself, I took up a position at the principal well, so as to rake the whole company coming to draw water, a duty always imposed upon the women. I was not disappointed, for many of them were indeed exceedingly handsome and beautifully formed, and but little darker than the inhabitants of the south of Europe; they are, however, totally uneducated. When Tattah was a large capital, with a population of 60,000 souls and the chief seat of the Ameers of Scinde, its manufactures were in perfection, and its reputation for cloth work very great, but since the Ameers removed to Hyderabad and the population has dwindled to not more than 6000 or 8000, but little business is transacted. The lions of the place are its ruins and the mosque, which is a fine specimen of decayed gentility, for once it must have been very handsome, and even now its coloured tile-work would not disgrace an English operative. Mangos, melons, and grapes are to be had in abundance, as well as a great variety of vegetables; and I can assure you that mango-fool is not to be despised, being equally as good as its European relation, gooseberry-fool. Turned in at 7 P.M. and rose again with the moon at 3; saddled and started for Gouja, and arrived there at daylight (5 o'clock), performing the distance (12 miles) in two hours,—not bad for a camel with two persons on its back: my servant almost done up, complaining that he had lost more than he had gained during the last stage. Went out for a walk with my gun, but there being little jungle, found few birds; shot a large Iguana, however, which my servant wanted very much to make into cutlets for my breakfast, but I magnanimously made him a present of it, and he doubtless ate it!!! Gouja is a village destitute of interest, but which annually kills an officer or two (because they will go snipe

shooting) by its vile fever. The sea breeze is felt there strongly, and dews fall at night. The remainder of the road to Kurrachee is dreary, and the sooner passed the better. It is three night's journey, and I arrived on the morning of the fourth day, after leaving Gouja much improved by the trip.

Ghizneebunder Sanatarium, June 1.
Thermometer 95° in a tent.

The saying, that "there is no peace for the wicked," is a truism, for during a pause in writing, an hokum (an Anglo-Indian phrase, meaning order) came for me to move on, *i. e.* to quit my nice little bungalow, pack up my furniture, and go to live on the top of a hill under a broiling sun, five or six miles away from any civilization. To hear is to obey, so here I am. The superintending surgeon and the general having determined that the men must have change of air, and that the situation must be high, they chose one of the loftiest pinnacles at this spot whereon to build the "Sanatarium," and here the men of whom I have medical charge are now located: the place is high and healthy without doubt, but its general characteristics are great dullness, horrid roads, and a total absence of anything of interest. As no quarters are provided for officers, and there not being a vestige of a house near the place, I have pitched my tent and live like a patriarch with my flocks and herds (two goats and five hens) around me. In England the complaint would be "too cold," here it is "too hot," for the sun thinks nothing of one layer of canvass, and drives a good deal of his strength through several. From 4 P.M. to 8 A.M. it is pleasant enough, the cool breeze blowing through the tent, and the thermometer averaging 85°, but from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. you lie down quietly and are baked: the little episode of the hokum prevented my completing this letter for some days, for the trouble of moving oneself and a body of men into new quarters, interferes sadly with letter writing. The botany of the surrounding country is meagre, resolving itself into a Euphorbia, a few lichens, and a very fine lilac-coloured convolvulus; I find this latter plant everywhere, particularly on the sands near the sea; when I have an opportunity I will send home some of the seeds. The only birds are the sand-grouse and a species of lark, the crows and sparrows even contemptuously avoiding such a dried-up place; about two miles distant is a creek banked with rocks, which is a favourite resort for water-fowl. In my pursuit of natural history this morning, an accident happened which I am afraid will lose me a good servant. A pair of hawks had built their nest in the rocks, about fifteen feet from the ground, and my gharawallah (groom) declared that nothing would be so easy as to take it, and that he could climb up the side of a house, so I sent him

up, but when within a few feet of it he screamed out and fell; he afterwards stated that the devil (*shitan*) came behind and pushed him off; the fall would have been nothing on soft ground, but the poor fellow fell across a stone and injured his spine; I had to gallop into camp and fetch a palanquin and four men to bring him into hospital, where I am now treating him. The hills hereabout abound with jackals and hyænas, and one of the latter came within the tent-ropes last night after my unhappy goats; the barking of the dogs awoke me, when I saw him gazing affectionately at my throat, not two yards distant; a clout on the head with a stone sent him off.

Owing to the war we know not how soon troops may be ordered to the Persian frontier, and then all the doctors will be wanted, nor, if there be a chance of seeing service, would I wish to lose it; this, however, would interfere with my proposed journey to Khelat, of which I spoke in my last; but supposing my services should not be required, and I could obtain leave, I should like to start in the month of December to the Lake Munchar, beyond Hyderabad, where, during the winter, is to be found a reunion of all the water-fowl in Scinde: I am told that the ducks, geese, cranes, and, in fact, all the natatorial and wading-birds congregate there in immense numbers; thence to Luccur and Shikarpore, shooting all the way. I should then wish to explore an entirely new country, zoologically speaking, —Khelat—the temperature of which is somewhat similar to our own, freezingly cold in winter, with a delightful spring; it is well wooded, and doubtless contains much of interest to the naturalist; with introductions from the Commissioner, I believe I should be well treated by the "Khan;" the only difficulty is to reach it. From Jacobabad to Khargarth, our extreme frontier military post, there are two routes, one by the well-to-be-remembered Bolan Pass (*vide* the march of our troops to Cabul), and the other by Gundawa and the Gundawa Pass. By the Bolan, the chances are about equal whether I should get through or have my throat cut, for the Khan cannot control the fierce Beelooch hill-robbers, although his own subjects; they would attack anything under the force of fifty men; by Gundawa the road is tolerably safe, being under the influence of the Scinde horse; that is the road I should take. It is seventeen days' march between Jacobabad and Khelat, which I should reach at the commencement of spring, and a month or six weeks' stay would enable me to ascertain the zoological resources of the country, after which I should return to Kurrachee and resume my medical duties. This leave I do not wish for any private, but for a scientific purpose, and the collections I may make would be sent, after any novelties had been described, to the Company's house in Leadenhall Street, or such of them as they

may want for their museum; everything, however, must depend upon circumstances.

Letter No. 8.

Ghiznee Sanatarium, July 15, 1854.
Thermometer 92°.

I am afraid you will think I have been rather remiss in my correspondence of late, but I have more than one reason to offer. First, I am only just recovering from an attack of one of the low fevers of this country, and am now taking a vast quantity of quinine, under the influence of which I am getting all right; for some days I was regularly laid on my back, and might now be known by the nickname of "bones;" I am not the only one who has suffered, which selfish people would call a consolation; in the next place, I have been hourly expecting the return of Mr. Frere for the last three weeks, and at length he has arrived. I called upon him immediately; he received me very kindly, promised me his influence at head-quarters to obtain permission for my proposed journey to Khelat, &c. Have you any remarks to make respecting its ornithology? It may be interesting to you to know that a fine Houbara Bustard (*Otis Macqueeni*) is very common here during the winter; it is much sought after by the officers and considered fine "shikar" or sport; my tent is pitched in the midst of the Houbara ground. A very pretty small species of deer is also common in this neighbourhood; it is about the size of a gazelle, with sharp straight horns, is very difficult of approach, and incredibly fleet; I suppose it is well known; will you inquire, and let me know its name? the young are sold in the Bazaar at one rupee each and soon become very tame; I have one now that is allowed to wander about at pleasure, and which invariably comes to sleep in my bed at night: any number of beautiful Amaduvades may be bought in the Bazaar at one penny per pair, and Parrots at fourpence each; if the means of transit were easy I could send home a gross of these small birds.

I will now give you a short account of an excursion to a well-known spot called "Munghur Peer" or the "Munghur Talou," *Anglice* Holy Alligator or the Alligator Tank. Some time ago, a very holy mussulman pitched upon this oasis as his dwelling-place; a pure spring flows from a rock in a valley surrounded by immense barren volcanic hills, forming part of that range of rugged mountains which is seen so conspicuously from Kurrachee; the spring above mentioned vivifies a small extent of surrounding country, nourishes groves of date palms and banian trees, and encourages the cultivation of various fruits and vegetables; the old gentleman, finding that he had fallen into a good berth, sanctified

it: here he lived and died, after which happy release his body was conveyed to the top of an awfully high rock and there buried; his faithful disciples erecting a large tomb over his remains: this is said to be a fine work of art, but I have seen no one who has had the courage to ascend and inspect it. The spring after his death became more holy than before, and a tolerably-sized mosque was built over it; a large stone tank with steps was constructed for it to flow into, and the overflowing surplus water now forms a marsh or pond which is full of small islands a few feet distant from each other, and it is in the water between these that the alligators are to be found; there are several hundreds of them, varying in size from 6 inches to more than twice as many feet; they live in a state of great fraternity; their calm serenity being only disturbed by that most useful dispensation of providence, the larger devouring the smaller ones; they are considered most holy by the mussulmen and are actually worshiped by them; in which, however, they slightly depart from the precepts of the Koran, which says, "*La Ala ila allah—Mahomed rasoul allah,*" the famous profession of the mussulman faith. From most of the districts of Scinde, the natives make pilgrimages to these beasts, throwing goats to them as peace offerings; the inhabitants of the small village adjoining the mosque feed them regularly, and are great in the odour of sanctity. Should a little native urchin be swallowed, through his indiscreetly venturing too near, they say his is a happy *kismet* or fate, for he is sure of paradise. The brutes do not confine themselves to the water, but wander among the palm trees and low bushes, and wherever a sahib discovers a cool retreat there a large alligator is sure to be found, and before a transfer of seat can be effected, must be fought and disloged, or run away from, if he charges. Not long since one of them killed a man, upon hearing which two officers resolved to take vengeance, and accordingly in spite of military prohibition shot the delinquent, whereupon all the crazy and bigoted inhabitants turned out to avenge the insult, and had they not been well armed it would have gone hard with the sacrilegious scamps. These holy reptiles are not without their royal family, of which, however, there exists at present but one lineal descendant, by name *moor-sahib,* who is the acknowledged king of the alligators; although superior to his subjects not only by his descent but by his enormous size and appetite, he is but a lilliputian in size, and a trifler as regards his powers of eating compared with his late sainted and lamented sire, concerning whom the inhabitants of the village relate marvels of masticatory prowess. The present king does not associate with his subjects, but is built into a large underground tank covered above by masonry; in the roof of this palace is a hole something like,

but rather larger than, that into a coal-cellar; when his majesty is to be fed, his attendant thrashes the water with a long stick through the hole in the roof; and the well-known sound brings him to the surface, where, without condescending to unclose his eyes, he opens an enormous pair of jaws and waits patiently till the delicate morsel, such as half a donkey or a goat, is dropped into them; the jaws instantly close with a terrific snap and the royal personage disappears from sight.

The rains have just set in here;—very pleasant for those who live in houses, but quite the contrary for poor wretches who, like myself, are under canvass; my tent will stand two days' rain well enough, but after that it begins to feel moist, gradually-increasing puddles make their appearance below, and water drips in from above; but one hot day makes all dry again. After a shower your tent becomes the refuge of all the vermin in the neighbourhood; snakes, scorpions, centipedes, frogs and lizards occupy the dark corners, whilst all attempts at reading or eating by night are frustrated by the countless myriads of large ants, from half to one inch in length, that fly into every habitation, and cover the lamps, table-cloth, books, &c., smother your shirt and collar, get down your back, and after having caused an immense deal of annoyance and inconvenience, leave their wings as a parting present and crawl away; so that in the morning the tables, chairs, other furniture, and the floors are found strewed with these relics. A very beautiful ground spider makes its appearance after the rains; it is about the size of a bean, and of the most splendid scarlet, resembling velvet in appearance and lustre; it is seen at no other time, and is apparently driven from its underground retreat by the rain.

I was called up last night to a man who was said to have been bitten by a snake, whilst pulling about some bundles of straw; however, he looked exceedingly well under the infliction, and I told him to poultice his wound and go to bed; he awoke in the morning quite well; it was doubtless a piece of broken glass that had cut him. The natives of Scinde seem to be much afraid of snakes, and not without reason, for the mortality from snake's bites is said to be terrific, and hardly credible; so much so that the Medical Board has taken notice of it, and recommended medical officers to gain every information on the subject. The first night of the rain my servant killed two snakes close to my bed.

I wish I had something more pleasant to relate, but, banished to this dreary spot, I am become rather hypochondriac, and fancy I have heart, liver and spleen diseases, besides a few others; my punishment will probably last to the end of October, when the troops will be called in. The officer in charge of the men has a very pretty schooner in the harbour, but it is rather too warm

to go out sailing often. I and two or three friends rode out from camp the other day, and, as there was a pleasant fresh breeze blowing, we resolved upon a sail. All went on well at first; the jib was hoisted, then the mainsail, and last of all the foresail, when she flew through the waters. Upon approaching the breakers we thought it was time to tack round, but unfortunately we had each relied upon the other's nautical abilities, and found to our great vexation that no one knew how to put her about. We then began to experimentalize: helm hard down, some sails held in, others let loose, of course the wrong ones; now going before the wind, the next moment in *irons*, and very much in a pickle; at last we were very providentially stopped by our anchor over the bows catching in the buoy-rope of one of the Indian Navy steam-boats, and instantly lowering sail, we were brought-to, much to the delight of us navy-muffs.

I have received intelligence that my box of books has arrived at Bombay, where it is likely to remain for some months, all steam-communication between Bombay and Kurrachee being of necessity suspended during the monsoon, for none but large ships could live in the present turbulent state of the ocean. I hope they are packed in tin; if not, adieu to the books, for the white ants will speedily finish them, leaving me perhaps the covers. The communication will be re-established in September; in the interim, all letters, newspapers, &c., come over-land from Bombay.

Talking of papers, you don't know how acceptable an 'Athenæum' now and then would be; there is not a copy in Kurrachee, although we have 'Punch,' the 'Illustrated News,' and a host of others. Can you get me a letter of introduction to Major Jacob, of the Scinde Horse? His town of Jacobabad is the last station on the road I purpose taking to Khelat. There he has a magnificent palace, and lives *en prince*, along with his splendid cavalry. He is an influential man in this country, and I suspect has great frontier influence; he could therefore much assist my views. He has scoured the surrounding country for hundreds of miles with his horse; a troop of which were in Kurrachee a few weeks since,—such splendid fellows, and most of them decorated with medals. The greater number of them are natives of the highest castes; their uniform is a green coat or tunic, fitting loosely, red turban, trousers and jack-boots; their arms, a double-barreled rifle and a heavy crooked sabre, which they well know how to use.

Letter No. 9.

Ghiznee, August 15, 1854.
Thermometer 85°.
Cool and cloudy.

I received your letter of July 6 yesterday, and it set me up wonderfully, for since my last to you the fever returned with redoubled violence, and completely capsized me; after a fortnight's absence from duty, however, I am again convalescent, and ruining the company in tonics; your letter acted as a mental stimulant, and has done more good than much physic, for I was becoming stolid, careless, and stupid, trusting much to "kismet." Fever has been very prevalent of late, but it is not of a virulent kind, content to floor without hitting you when down; it is not "guerre à la mort," too often the war-cry of the Upper Scinde fevers. That it is impartial, the following fact will show; three weeks since an officer and twenty-five sappers proceeded to "Jemadar Kelandee," a village ten miles from Kurrachee, for engineering purposes; the place is fair to look upon, and supplies the best butter within a hundred miles, but the demon of sickness was there, and in a few days they returned, struck down to a man with fever. I attribute my own illness to passing a hot summer under canvass, for a tent cannot effectually exclude the fierce rays of a blazing sun, which are, moreover, reflected into it by a hard rocky soil devoid of vegetation. I am glad to find my letters were not destitute of interest, for they were hastily and carelessly written. Ghiznee is not the locality from whence to supply you with much information as regards Scinde; its natural products being but few; in the absence of anything of greater moment, perhaps you would like to know something of the domestic resources of Kurrachee and the circumjacent country. Substantials in the shape of beef and mutton are plentiful and cheap; the latter is small, very small, a leg weighing about four pounds, but it can occasionally be had somewhat larger; its price is one ana per pound. The sheep are celebrated for their tails, which are of an enormous size, and one mass of fat. Good beef is also to be had at the same price as mutton. Kid's flesh is not despised, and one day in the week pig is converted into pork; but our friend so much relished in England is but little honoured here, none but the very lowest castes condescending to touch him; and his very name being an abomination; so if you wish to irritate a native, hint at the "suer," in connection with himself, and the required irritation will be immediately produced. Fowls are brought into Kurrachee in vast numbers, and fetch four anas (sixpence) each. Ducks can be obtained at a little higher price, but are considered by the Mahometan population as unclean. Turkey, being an expensive luxury, is only produced at mess on great nights. Pigeons are

very plentiful, but are not worth eating, besides being considered holy by some of the castes. The sea and harbour supply us with fish in any quantity and of every size; many species are brought to market, from the Sardine to the noble "Seer" fish, which is about the size of a cod and superior to it in flavour. Oysters are abundant, and when in season rival "real natives:" for one hundred you pay sixpence. The pearl oyster, although not eaten, is eagerly sought after for its precious contents. Magnificent prawns, of doubtful feeding, are caught in numbers, and are sold at the ridiculously low price of one ana (three halfpence) for two pounds weight; they grow to an enormous size, some being 7 or 8 inches in length, but the smaller ones are the best. Kurrachee is certainly not famous for its fruits; what little are to be had mostly comes from Hyderabad and Tattah; Bombay also furnishes its quota before the monsoon closes the port; and the Government gardens contribute a few figs, plantains, guavas and pomegranates. The numerous gardens behind the town produce lettuces, cucumbers, onions, pumpkins, vegetable marrows, yams, sweet potatoes and capital water-cresses. The gardens are all irrigated artificially either by the Persian wheel, or a peculiar contrivance of leathern bags worked by bullocks. This adds greatly to the expense of gardening; but from what I have seen, with a little extra care and trouble all the Indian fruits might be raised in them. At present apples are plentiful, being brought down in abundance from Cabul and Candahar; they are rather hard and sour I must confess, but for all that they look like old friends, and I have seriously endangered my teeth and digestive powers in renewing their acquaintance. Antone the butler, observing me regarding a basket of these apples rather affectionately, suggested "apple pudding;" the suggestion meeting with approval he set about making it, but alas! poor fellow, his talents were not equal to his good wishes, for the pudding was certainly the greatest curiosity in a culinary way I ever met with; no mortal teeth could manage it, and I requested the chop-fallen "bhoy" to confine his efforts to curries and pillaus in future. A little pleasing excitement is now afforded by the presence of a few robbers in the neighbourhood; the rascals follow their professional duties by night, are all but naked, grease their black skins, and are particularly expert in the use of a long sharp knife, their constant companion, and woe betide the man who incautiously closes with one of them; he is either disemboweled or the tendons of his detaining arms are severed; either of which effectually frees the thief. Last week two of them made a successful foray upon my property; they came when the moon was up and extracted a large trunk which was reposing in fancied security within three feet of where my butler and his

wife were sleeping; this they conveyed to a rock, about one hundred and fifty yards distant, and forcing off the lock, discovered that the box did not contain the fabulous rupees, but only the provisions; not being proud, however, they appropriated all my rice, flour, tea, and sugar, and, amongst other things, some arseniated soap; much good may it do them. A tent is too easily entered, and the bait too tempting for them to resist the feeling that urged them to a second attempt, however prudence might forbid it, and accordingly three nights ago I was awakened by an apprehension that the thieves were about, but upon making a search nobody was found; I afterwards learnt, however, that at that very time one of them entered the barracks and abstracted a watch from the sergeant. A short time afterwards my servant was awakened by a noise in the tent produced by some one falling over a number of soda-water bottles placed in a corner; he aroused me and we made a rush, for our friend was standing at the door, but he made off and got away. A watch is now kept every night, and I hope to catch or shoot one of them before long.

Letter No. 10.

Ghiznee Sanatarium, Sept. 20, 1854.
Thermometer 80° at 11 A.M.

I FEAR one or two of my letters have miscarried, as you do not mention them; probably they have been entirely dissolved *en route*,—no unlikely circumstance, you will say, when I tell you what they have to go through. During the monsoon, all letters, papers, &c. are carried overland to Bombay by a route that none but a native could traverse, the post being borne by relays of men and lattoos (ponies) across the delta of the Indus or the Runn of Cutch. During the transit the unfortunate letter-bag is exposed to the continual torrents of rain which pour down from above, and at the same time has to be waded through miles of mud and water below; now bedaubed with dirt, and then soused in the coffee-coloured stream of a nullah; at length its dilapidated remains reach Bombay, where it is disemboweled and its contents enclosed in another skin for England. Such is the painful history of the Kurrachee post-bag!

You will be pleased to hear that I have just received a long letter from Mr. Blyth, of Calcutta, who evidently opines, that, having been brought up in the halls of science, I must be thoroughly acquainted with its long-named treasures—painful delusion!—and quite easily requests me to procure for him specics of the *Soricidæ*, *Erinacidæ*, *Hypsipidæ*, *Malacocercidæ*, and many others; all which I would most readily do. But what

sort of a beast is an *Erinaceus* or a *Malacocercus*, still remains a profound mystery to me, and is likely to be, until I get hold of a treatise on hard names which will unravel the seeret; for if it be supposed that such knowledge ought to come by the "light of nature," I can only say that she has not as yet illumined me by her countenance. This is why I requested a treatise on the science of ornithology. I shall get on better when I receive my books. Mr. Blyth wishes a correspondence to be kept up between us, and of course I shall be happy to promote his views in every way I can.

You wish me to give you some account of Hyderabad, but I have been so short a time in that town that I can furnish but little information respecting it. It is situated on the right bank of the Indus, at about two miles from the river, and is the head-quarters of several regiments. Kotree, its offspring and port, is on the opposite side of the river; and round this point all the little cockle-boats constituting the Indus flotilla rally; and here the stormy port-captain superintends the consumption of tar and spun-yarn; wretched low-caste dark-coloured marines keep perpetual guard over everything; naval punctilio is strictly kept up, and you are expected to "dip your royals" on stepping into a small steamer, which the Ant, Bee, and Cricket of Hungerford Bridge would avoid as bad company. The regiments stationed at Hyderabad are the 86th Royals, 6th Native Infantry, and a Beloochee battalion, which last is one of great interest, being composed of the soldiers who fought against us so bravely at Meanee, but who are now in our pay. Their dress is comfortable and loose, the much-to-be-abhorred red being eschewed; but they are awful blackguards, and require a regiment or two to be stationed with them to preserve order. Concerning the town itself I have little to say; it is like most other Scinde towns, with its small mud houses, dirty bazaars, and dirtier inhabitants. The principal objects of interest are the fort and tombs, the former being the residence of the Ameers while alive, and the latter when dead. The fort is tolerably strong, but would not withstand a battery; it is lofty and well-pierced for musketry. The tombs awaken a feeling of surprise that such fine sculptured buildings should have been erected by a people residing in mud huts, and not more than a quarter civilized. They resemble mosques, have the usual number of cupolas, minarets, &c., and are beautifully decorated externally with coloured tiles made in Scinde, on which are inscribed various texts from the Koran. The largest of these tombs is between forty and fifty feet high, and is handsomely adorned internally with tiles of a finer quality and brighter colours, the patterns being very tastefully arranged. The immediate covering of the remains of the Ameers are of

sculptured white marble, very quiet and chaste, but beautifully executed, and would not, I can assure you, disgrace Westminster Abbey. At the head of the largest sarcophagus rests the helmet worn during life of one of the most powerful of the Ameers. Hyderabad is celebrated for its embroidery and wood-work. The table-cloths, caps and slippers, worked in silver and gold, will vie with and surpass everything in that way produced at home. *Hyderabad boxes* are celebrated throughout India for their beauty and neatness of execution. A great trade is also driven in carved and coloured bed-posts! When an opportunity offers, I will send you and the girls some of the above curiosities,—not the bed-posts!

The monsoon being now over, the communication between Kurrachee and Bombay by water is again re-established; the weather is much cooler, and the nights even somewhat chilly; a delightful breeze is blowing through the tent, and the thermometer keeps down to 84°, even in the middle of the day. October is said to be a very hot month, and I am told that winter sets in in November, when it becomes so dreadfully cold, that thick warm clothes, and crouching over fires, take the place of pyejamas and sitting in drafts. The tanks and sides of creeks will be then covered with ducks and snipes, and the plains become first-rate Houbara grounds. The present cool weather has put me to rights, and conquered the lingering remains of fever.

Shark-fishing is going on actively at present; they are caught in large nets, which are dragged across the harbour. The species is the ground-shark, the fins of which are considered a great delicacy by the Chinese; and it is to supply them that the sharks are captured.

Enclosed is a curious little bird which I shot on the sea-shore. What is its name*? It frequents the low salt marsh plants that grow at the edge of and even in the water. It is extremely difficult to shoot, and when shot, equally hard to find; it runs among the roots, and occasionally perches on a twig, gives forth a wheezy feeble song, and instantly drops into the thicket. The eye is dark.

Letter No. 11.

Ghiznee Sanatarium!!! Oct. 5, 1854.
Thermometer 102° in a tent.

You will see that October has set in rather warm. The thermometer rose 20° in two days—a slight change that one is perfectly sensible of, I can assure you; in addition to this we are treated to a hot land-wind every day, which is continually

* *Suya lepida*, an extremely rare bird in the collections of Europe.

raising those curious columns of sand so commonly seen in Arabia, and sending them spinning across the plains; these both Europeans and natives agree in naming after his satanic majesty;—our term for them is "devil," and their's "shitan," the corresponding word in Hindustance. The warm weather has given life to numbers of the dragon-fly family, but their short life is cut still shorter by the numbers of birds that come, self-invited, to the feast; shrikes, bee-eaters, hoopoes, stone-chats, wheatears, willow-wrens, and many other species, have now appeared about the rocks, where, a month since, nothing but a lark was to be seen. Terns, that before could only be found at sea, now come wandering over the land, and, hunting up and down, soon fill their stomachs with the delicious morsels; even the very cheels (kites) have given up their carrion-feeding propensities. The consequence of this good feeding is very distressing to the collector, for the birds become so fat that it is almost impossible to skin or preserve them: my servant is in despair, and brings me a mass of oily feathers as the result of an hour's labour. Is there any remedy? Large flocks of cranes are continually passing over my tent, "*en route*" to the Indus. Geese have been seen, and I myself have fired at ducks, all which are indications of approaching winter; wading-birds of all kinds are now exceedingly common, but very difficult to procure, for they congregate on large open flats left at low water, and cannot be approached. The salt-water creeks too, in which they are to be found at certain stages of the tide, are quite exposed and without cover on their banks, so that if by dint of great care and caution you can manage to get within 300 yards of the water, you are then sure to hear some small plover or sanderling set up his shrill piping, to which that wariest of birds, the curlew, immediately responds, and away scuds every feather in the creek, leaving you to expend your vexation and charges upon the crabs and mud. There is one crane in particular that I have been after many times; he is a very cunning old gentleman, and evidently fond of a joke; he knows exactly how far a gun will carry, and allows me to approach, by dint of much knee-grazing and elbow work, to within 100 yards of him, and then, rightly imagining that a nearer proximity would be dangerous, gives a hoarse chuckling laugh, and, after four flaps of his enormous wings, is hopelessly gone; but I will be even with him some day.

Enclosed you will find a rough sketch of a thrush-like bird killed by me yesterday; it is the only one I have seen, but my servants know it well, and state that it is a beautiful songster. If you can make out the species from my drawing, I should like to know its name*.

* *Certhilauda bifasciata*, or an allied species.

"O me miserum! O me, miserabile dictu!!" a dire misfortune has befallen me. One morning, while pursuing my friend the crane, I broke the stock of my gun, or rather the horse broke it for me. As you may expect, I was much annoyed; first, because it was a present from you, and secondly, because the gun was a capital one to shoot with, and I was rapidly improving in the art. As it is impossible to get a new stock in Kurrachee, I have been obliged to expend £30 in the purchase of a fresh gun, and have obtained an excellent one with double barrels for shot and rifle fitting the same stock: I will send my lame gun back to Fisher's to be restocked.

Mr. Frere has, I believe, very kindly written to Lord Elphinstone respecting my journey to Khelat, and has also offered the services of an excellent person in his pay to accompany me; with this assistance, if leave be granted me, I hope to make a good collection, and do some service to science; I intend shooting everything that comes in my way, and it will be your task to determine whether anything be new or otherwise. You will say, this is rather Don-Quixotish; but the sight of a fine country will quite recompense me for any little self-disgust at the butchering nature of my propensities; all for science, "ça va bien," the healing pill is swallowed. I wish that you could be with me, the trip would then be a great treat, and I might learn something. Please to let me know how to make "damper," as, if I go, I shall have to be my own baker for a few months; I should like to know this by return of post, and also to receive any other hints your bush experience enables you to give. As I have before said, if I am allowed to take this journey, I shall proceed as soon as another assistant-surgeon has been found to supply my place. Towards the end of next month, on the approach of winter, all the regiments will be on the move: ours, it is expected, will be ordered to Hyderabad, and the fusiliers will supply our place at Kurrachee; the 83rd are ordered to Deesa in Gujerat, a frightfully hot place, but with capital shooting; for there abound the Indian lion and tiger, antelopes, and Sambur deer, and buffaloes are seen in great numbers; the artillery will proceed to Poonah, and the 14th Native Infantry to Shikarpore, her Majesty's 86th having the doleful prospect of Aden before them. Mr. Frere starts for his annual tour of the district on the 2nd of November, taking with him a good hunter and stuffer; he has requested me to let him know what objects are most desirable for the advancement of science, which, as you are aware, he is always anxious to promote; he has already sent considerable collections to the Norwich museum.

The "Moharran," or sanctifying of the Mussulman new year, is just over; the anniversary of the death of Ali, the fourth Caliph, son-in-law of Mahomet, and the murder of his two sons,

Hassan and Hoscin, grandchildren of the Prophet, their martyrdom forming the rock which splits the Mussulman religion into its two great divisions, *Shiites* and *Sonnites*; the former vilifying Ali and his descendants, the latter glorifying them as martyrs. These two sects, although springing from the same stock, entertain an intense disgust and hatred of one another; for instance, a Belooch-Patan, Scindëe or Affghan, looks upon a Persian as a hog, and the son of a burnt father, and various compliments of a similar nature are interchanged. In celebration of the massacre a kind of fast is established, when much sham weeping and humbug is indulged in, combined in many cases with much strong liquor, which would greatly have shocked the founder of their faith could he see it, for Mahomet never allowed any one but himself to be wicked, and always committed sins in accordance with a particular revelation that he might do so.

P.S.—I enclose a few postage stamps for your inspection: we have now got ana postage all over India; 16 anas=1 rupee =2 shillings.

Letter No. 12.

Camp, Kurrachee, Nov. 7, 1854.
Thermometer, morning, 62°.
12 o'clock, 89°.

I have just received Mr. Prince's letter, which has relieved my mind of considerable anxiety concerning you all, on account of the prevalence of cholera. I regret much that so many of our neighbours have been swept off by it, and esteem it a great mercy that our family has been spared. At Ghiznee I had always before me an evidence of the dreadful effects of this great modern scourge; for only a few years since, Her Majesty's 86th Regiment lost nearly 400 men in one week by cholera, and their bodies were thrown into large pits close to the site upon which the Sanatarium is now built, and a few mounds are now the only traces of the calamity. You will see by the heading of this letter that I have descended from the heights, and resumed my station among civilized beings.

My petition for a scientific journey to Khelat has been sanctioned, with the approbation of Government; but the Medical Board have decided that my services cannot be dispensed with at present; I hope to be more fortunate next year. In the mean time, the Oriental languages shall be my study.

I am now ordered to proceed with the left wing of the 14th Native Infantry to Shikarpore, in medical charge, and to return with the 2nd Grenadiers. Great are the preparations to be made for a long march of three months. All superfluous kit must be sold off and warm clothing bought, not only for myself,

but for my servants and horses, otherwise they would be frozen to death. What a great mistake it is to suppose that thick coats and trousers are not required in this country! I can assure you, that the cold is felt more severely than in England, and thick woollen coats, buttoned up to the chin, are now coming into fashion for morning wear. There is a very warm cloth, made from camel's hair, that is much used here; it is brought down from Kandahar and Cabul by the Kafilas or caravans, which start from up the country in the cold weather, and, passing through Beloochistan and Scinde, take water at Kurrachee, proceed to Bombay, and then go southward along the coast, selling their merchandise, and returning to Cabul and Bokara when it is all disposed of. Their traffic consists of horses, dogs, arms, dry fruits and warm clothing. The horses are large and strong, and are generally bought by Government for the artillery, at a standard price of 400 rupees. The dogs are principally greyhounds, of strength and speed, but not so good as our English breed; they sell at from 10 to 20 rupees each. Apples and dried apricots are brought in great abundance. The caravan-men are Pushtoos or Affghans, and have a very villanous-looking aspect. Many of them are quite as fair as Europeans, and have nothing of the nigger about them. We march on the 16th, and are now getting ready. I have bought a good tent for myself, and a *rowtee* for the servants; these will require two camels for their transport. We shall march at the rate of 12 miles per diem, with a halt every three days. Starting at 3 o'clock A.M. and marching till 8, we then pitch the camp and rest the remainder of the day, except the time the officers may be disposed to employ in shooting, hunting, &c. Shikar (game) is said to be very plentiful on the line of march, in the shape of partridges, ducks, snipes, hogs and hog-deer; the hog I shall let alone, not being sufficiently well mounted to stand much chance of getting a spear. I shall keep a journal of events, and let you have a good history of the march. The military world is much agitated just now by the death of the Commander-in-Chief, Lord A. F. Fitzclarence; the chief command devolves upon General Somerset, who will leave this for Bombay by the next boat. The brothers Adolph and Hermann Schlagintweit, the scientific German geologists and glacier explorers mentioned in your last letter, have arrived at Bombay; if they visit Scinde, I will pay them every attention. Through the kindness of an officer who is just leaving here for England, I send you a small parcel of bird-skins, and a few articles of Delhi silver and gold work for the girls. Please to send me the names of the birds, according to the numbers, as I have retained duplicates. I have sent sketches also of the colours of the soft parts of the birds.